

# A Comparative Study of Social Welfare Education in Japan and the Republic of Korea\*

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## Introduction

Japan and the Republic of Korea are neighboring countries. Though geographically close, the two countries are not so close, especially in mutual understanding. It seems the main reason for this remains mainly on the Japanese side. We tend to favor Europe or North America and this is true in the field of social welfare, too. This paper's aim is to get some basic understanding of social welfare education and the underlying principles in the two countries. Also, this paper will examine American influence on social welfare education in the two countries.

## 1. A Brief Outline of Japanese Social Welfare Education

The beginning of social welfare education was in the middle of 1920's after the First World War in Japan. Taishou University had opened an institute of social work study in 1918. Seven universities or colleges were established between then and the end of the Second World War. Most of them were all religiously affiliated (Christian or Buddhist) educational institutions and none of them were national nor public universities. The government had opened the Social Worker's Training Institute for the training of workers in reformatories. However, this institute was not a college but a short course (six months) for those who finished middle school (high school). The Tokyo Social Work Research Institute (a semi-governmental organization) had opened a short course for graduates from colleges or universities. This program developed into the Japan College of Social Work after the war.

After the Pacific War, U. S. Occupation Headquarters encouraged the Japanese government to promote social welfare education. Also, the U. S. Military Govern-

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ment held many meetings and training work shops<sup>1)</sup> for Japanese officials and supervisors in public or private social agencies and institutions. Under these influences, with the democratization of higher education opening the door for female students, schools of social welfare have increased to 36 universities or colleges and 11 junior colleges as of August 1986. Among these are four public universities and two junior colleges. There are 16 graduate schools of social welfare, of which 12 schools have doctorate programs.

## 2. A Brief Outline of Korean Social Welfare Education

The Japanese government introduced few social relief activities during her control over Korea from August of 1910 through August of 1945. It has been said that Japan first brought the Western idea of social welfare to Korea<sup>2)</sup>. However, it was not clear to what extent Japan introduced the Western idea of social welfare to Korea. Although Japan had introduced some systems of relief work<sup>3)</sup> such as *Houmeniin* (district commissioner of relief), budgets spent for this activity were very restrictive. The main purpose of this system was to hold in check peoples' desire for liberation from Japanese control. Under such circumstance there was no real area of social work education in the Korean peninsula.

Japan set up the Seoul Imperial University but a department of social work, or any courses were not set up, just as none of the national universities had this kind of course in Japan. Besides the imperial university, there was a preparatory course attached to the university and eight colleges<sup>4)</sup> of three years set up by the government-general of Korea under Japanese control. Also, there were ten private colleges including three women's colleges. However, there were no colleges of social work either public or private though there were three colleges that had courses in sociology. One of them was Iwha Women's College and Guo Whang Kyeng, a graduate of the University of Michigan, was the only one who could teach empirical sociology that had been developed in the United States. Lee Man kab of Seoul University wrote that she favored social work than a purely scientific sociology<sup>5)</sup>. In that sense, she was a pioneer introducing Western ideas of social work to Korea in the 1930's.

Japan did not have any interests in social work education during her control over the peninsula for 35 years. This was quite a contrast with American attitude

toward Japanese social work and its education while the U. S. occupied Japan.

Therefore, the start of social welfare education in the Republic of Korea was 1947, two years after liberation from Japanese control, when Iwha Women's College in Seoul opened a course of Christian Social Work. Since then, thirty one schools of social work (welfare) have been established in various universities throughout the Republic of Korea. Nine of the universities have set up graduate schools in either master or doctorate programs as of 1988<sup>6)</sup>. This is a remarkable development, especially if we consider there were no colleges of social work and the country experienced the unfortunate Korean War from 1950 through 1953 in the early days of her independence. It is not clear in Japan to what extent the United States Government influenced social work and social work training in the Republic of Korea from the end of the Pacific War through the early 1960's. However, it could be said that American influence was strong through private social work organizations sponsored by foreign foundations or other resources.

### **3. The Beginning of Exchange in Social Welfare**

Both Japan and the Republic of Korea have been influenced by American ideas and methods of social work. However, the two countries have had no close exchanges on experiences in social work. Fortunately, since the early 1970's some private social work institutions began exchanges of experiences by visiting each other. Also, the first North-East Asian Seminar on Social Work Education was held in 1978 in Osaka, Japan, where over a quarter of million Korean residents have lived. Thus, the two countries have been increasing mutual understanding in various ways such as student exchange, faculty visits and others. The Furusato-no-Kazoku, home for countrymen and countrywomen, for the aged Korean residents started in 1989 in Osaka with contributions from people including Catholics in Japan and Korea. The home is the first of its kind as a social work institution in Japan. Both of us can understand each other and our cultures through this social work while extending aid to those who need it.

### **4. A Comparison of Curriculum in Social Work Education**

Kim Man Doo<sup>7)</sup> introduced the systems in Korean schools of social welfare,

and his thesis gives some interesting points. The Korean data in the following section are based in his study.

(a) Common courses

We can find many common courses in social welfare education in the two countries both in essential and elective subjects. They are the following courses:

History of Social work,	Introduction to Social Welfare,
Social Problems,	Social Legislation,
Social Security,	Social Policy,
Methods of Social Welfare,	Casework,
Group Work,	Community Organization,
Social Research,	Child Welfare,
Welfare for the Aged,	Welfare for the Handicapped,
Medical Welfare,	Field Work,
Reading English texts on Social welfare.	

Many of these subjects are the same but with some variations as those in schools of social welfare in North America and Europe.

(b) Courses in Japan (few in the Republic of Korea)

Many Japanese schools of social work teach the following courses but these are not found in the curriculum of Korean universities:

Institutional Care,	Rehabilitation,
Community Work,	Medical Knowledge,
Buraku Problem	

However, we have to take note of the possibility that these subjects might be taught under some other titles in the Republic of Korea. The last one, Buraku Problem, deals with problems and activities in some 6000 discriminated against communities with some three million Japanese residents. The origin of this discrimination goes back several centuries. Historical studies and scientific research have proved that the residents are political victims<sup>8)</sup>. It is natural, therefore,

that Korean universities do not teach this subject. There are few books of social work history which deal with this important problem of Japanese society even in Japan.

(c) Courses in the Republic of Korea (some not found in Japan)

Nine out of ten schools of social welfare in Korean universities have courses such as Social Structure & Deviant Behavior and Human Behavior & Environment (Development). Therefore, it seems these courses are important to social welfare education in the Republic of Korea. On the contrary, only few schools of social welfare have courses like these in Japan. Some have courses such as 'Structure of Living' or 'Social Pathology'. It is not clear whether these courses are equivalent to the above mentioned courses in Korean universities. Also, Japanese schools of social work do not have courses such as 'Social Development' or 'Community Development'. These differences suggest we need more concrete studies on these points. Some Japanese schools of social work have courses of comparative social welfare but most of them deal with social welfare programs in the United States, United Kingdom or Sweden. Unfortunately, we do not have a course on Korean social welfare. However, we, Japanese, need to pay more attentions toward conditions of Korean residents in Japan.

(d) Courses not found in Japanese and Korean Schools

We can find courses titled Drug Abuse or similar courses in the curriculums of the United State, Canada, or Sweden. However, this kind of course is not found in Japan nor the Republic of Korea. It may be a reflection of social conditions in these two countries that do not have serious problems of drug abuse. However, recently family breakdowns caused by drug abuse are increasing year by year in Japan.

Social work practice in cross-culture is an important activity in the United States and Canada, and this is reflected in the curriculums of schools of social work in North America. Sweden has also similar curriculums such as social service for immigrants. Japan maintained a national policy that prohibited immigrants from other countries just as Japanese travel abroad from the 15th century through the mid-19th century was restricted. Even today, the Japanese government's policy for immigration is very strict especially, for those who are from

neighboring countries in South East Asia. However, people from these countries are gradually increasing. This means a need for cross-culture practice in social work. Some private social work organizations, especially Catholic organizations, are active in helping immigrants including boat-people from Vietnam. However, there is, so far, no school of social work that has a course of cross-culture practices.

CAI, computer assisted instruction, is another important subject in Japanese schools of social welfare. There are few schools that offer courses such as computer-used methods of social welfare research. There are some schools that offer introductory courses on information processing on an elective base though the pace of development is slow. It is not clear how many schools offer these courses so far. Some faculty members take advantage of using computer and application disks such as Lotus 1-2-3 or SPSS in research, and some make programs themselves. It is dangerous to expect optimistic effects without deep consideration of human elements both in users of social services and workers. It is an important task that social work education has to deal.

It is not clear about these situations in Korean schools of social welfare because the available data is limited. However, it seems there are no schools that offer computer-aided methods of social welfare research, according to the report<sup>9)</sup> on the Korean schools of social welfare. Some schools or scholars may be using computing in their research or classes teaching just as their Japanese counter parts do. It could be said the future perspectives on this point may be bright in the Republic of Korea. Asahi Pasocon<sup>10)</sup>, reports that the computer industry in Korea is developing at a very fast tempo. Computers made in Korea are mostly IBM compatible and it means users of this product can access easily wider sources of information available in the world. This writer's observation is that Korean students learning in Japanese schools of social welfare are very eager to learn and use computing in their studies.

## 5. Affiliation

The following table shows no dominant affiliation in Japanese schools of social work. On the contrary, affiliation with Christian organization is almost half of that in schools of social work in the Republic of Korea.

Type of Affiliation<sup>11)</sup>

Affiliation \ Country	Japan	Republic of Korea
National or Public	4(P)	5(N)
Private		
Buddhist	10	1
Protestant	10	13
Catholic	1	2
Independent	10	10
Semi-National	1	0
Total	36	31

Sim Dae Sub pointed out that this trend is also found in the number of social work agencies in Korea<sup>12)</sup>. The ratio of welfare institutions in Korea is 1(Buddhist) to 13 (Christian). According to the study by the Korean National Council of Social Welfare, 77% of workers in social work institutions are Christians against 6% of Buddhist workers. Therefore, it is very important to take note of the Christian influence when we study Korean social welfare and its education. In Japan, schools of social welfare affiliated with the Buddhist organizations have opened courses such as introduction of Buddhism or Buddhist social welfare as an elective or required subject. Also, there are usually some faculty members who are Buddhist priests. However, most students are not religious regardless of being Buddhist or Christian just as in Japan.

The two countries are so-called Confucianism-culture nations and have long histories of Buddhism, but the present situation of their culture and national character show large diversities. Not Buddhism but Christianity is the dominant religion even though the Korean people have kept their long tradition, of teaching the Confucianism ideal to respect the aged. On the contrary, Buddhism is the dominant religion in Japan but it is doubtful whether Japanese society has maintained Confucius influences the same as Korean society.

National or public schools of social welfare in universities of the two countries are not many. However, we could say that governmental influences or controls are strong even in private universities through various means such as the founding standards for university. This is quite different from American universities that have thorough evaluation system<sup>13)</sup> under the Commission on Accreditation of CSWE, non-governmental auspices. The governmental influences over schools of social welfare in Japan may be increased through new changes in the recent

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legislation that is presented in the following section.

## **6. Professional Status and its Influence on Social Welfare Education**

For years Japanese social workers have hoped to establish their professional social status through the Japanese Association of Social Workers, Japanese Association of Schools of Social Work and other social welfare organizations. This long awaited desire has been fulfilled in the enactment of Social Welfare Worker's and Care Worker's Accreditation Act of 1987. It is 17 years behind the provision of Social Welfare Service Act of 1970 in the Republic of Korea.

Chapter Five of the Korean act provides that the Ministry of Health and welfare issue a certificate of qualification to social workers who are qualified. Those who have had a four year education in schools of social welfare are qualified for the first class certificate. Also, Chapter Six of the act has provided that social welfare organizations have to employ at least the minimum or over the numbers of employees with qualifications provided by the regulation<sup>14</sup>.

The Japanese act of 1987 requires, on the other hand, applicants for the national-wide unified examination designed by the act to have studied certain subject courses at universities or some designated educational institutes before application. Table in the appendix shows the subject courses in detail.

Today, it is a period of transition for many schools of social work in modifying their curriculum programs into a new line of subjects specified by the act of 1987. There are schools of social welfare that introduced specific courses or renamed subject courses though neither the Ministry of Health and Welfare nor the Ministry of Education requires them to do so. There are some schools that offer special guidance or work shops (not regular courses) for students who plan to apply for the national examination.

The specified courses are the reflection of opinions submitted by the Japanese Association of Schools of Social Work. In this sense, the new direction is a product of a democratic channel though there are some criticisms. However, we have to keep in mind that the governmental leadership or control may be possible or necessary to some extent in developing stages. In future, Japanese schools of social welfare should have more non-governmental self autonomy in establishing the contents of the professional education of social welfare.



It may be that strong governmental leadership or influences are common also in the Republic of Korea.

## Conclusion

The histories of social work education are rather short in both Japan and the Republic of Korea. Therefore in the early stages of social welfare education, there were few faculties who specialized in social welfare and had experience working in the field of social work. To fulfill the needs of teachers at newly established schools of social welfare, one way is sending selected people to the United States or European countries, mainly the United Kingdom. This has influenced methods and contents in social work education. It seems that Korean social welfare education had more outside influence than that of Japan, because the Republic of Korea has long been influenced by America.

It is obvious that social work education in Japan and the Republic of Korea have been influenced more by America than any other country. Therefore, there is some criticism or self examination that the American way of social work education does not fit into countries with different patterns of social life and cultures. Despite some criticism against Americanized methods of helping people in Japan, there are none, so far, of constructive methods of helping that replace case work.

We can find the same courses such as casework, group work or community organization that started originally in American schools of social work. We use terminologies such as intake, supervision, workability and others in Japanese social work books. These are also obtained from American social work literature. American influences are strong on Japanese education in social work as far as these terms or titles of courses are concerned. However, it is doubtful whether we really use these words to which American social workers give meaning or content. It is afraid that we use these words only superficially without much considerations. For instance, supervision in casework is different from giving directives or teaching what to do.

It is the Japanese or Korean workers or teachers' task whether American methods of helping people are applicable in their societies. It is important we explore better methods that suite our societies, if any. For this purpose, we need to study our culture's patterns of daily life, patterns of communication, including

non-verbal communications in detail. American social work has accumulated many research in these fields especially in cross-culture or immigrants. Social welfare education in Japan need not only the introduction of theory but also intensive methods of practices and scientific methods.

## Appendix A

### Social Welfare (work) Courses in 10 Universities in Republic of Korea, as of the end of 1986

Courses	Remark
Introduction to Social Work (Welfare)	I, 1*
Social Science and Social Welfare	I, 2
Human Behavior and Social Environment(1)	II, 1*
Social Problem	II, 1*
Reading in Social Work (Welfare)	II, 1
Human Behavior and Social Environment(2)	II, 2*
Juvenile Delinquency	II, 2
Population Problem	II, 2
Developmental History of Social Welfare (Work)	II, 1*
Casework	III, 1*
Groupwork	III, 1*
Community Organization	III, 1*
Policy of Social Welfare	III, 1*
Family Welfare	III, 1
Problem in Poverty	III, 1
Methods of Social Work	III, 1
Research in Social Welfare	III, 2*
Social Work Field Work, Social Problem Field Work	III, 2*
Child and Youth Welfare	III, 2
Legislation in Social Welfare (Social Legislation)	III, 2
Seminar in Social Welfare	III, 2
Social Welfare Administration	IV, 1*
Social Work Field Work	IV, 1*
Social Security	IV, 1
Welfare for the Aged	IV, 1

System of Social Welfare (Comparison)	IV. 1
Welfare for the Handicapped	IV. 2
Industrial Welfare	IV. 2
Special Lecture in Social Welfare (Work)	IV. 2
Medical (Mental) welfare	IV. 2

Note: \*mark indicate required courses.

I to IV indicate academic year.

1 and 2 show first semester and second semester.

Source: National Council of University of Social Welfare (Work),

Republic of Korea, 1986, translated from Prof. M. D. Kim's thesis on the professional education in Republic of Korea, *Professional Education in Social Welfare*, p. 242, vid. References (6).

## Appendix B

Specified Courses to be taken by applicants for National  
Examination of Shakai Fukusisi (registered social  
worker) at Japanese Social welfare Universities

Courses	Remark
1. Principle of Social welfare	
2. Theory of Welfare for the Aged	
3. Theory of Welfare for the Handicapped	
4. Theory of Child Welfare	
5. Theory of Social Security	} select one course
Theory of Public Assistance	
Theory of Community Welfare	
6. General Introduction to Method of Aid in Social welfare	
7. Method of Aid: Specific Subject I (include Casework & Groupwork)	
8. Method of Aid: Specific Subject II (include Community Work & Social Welfare Research)	
9. Seminar in Method of Aid in Social Welfare	
10. Field Work in agency & institution	
11. Psychology	} select one course
Sociology	
Jurisprudence	
12. Medical knowledge	

13. Introduction to Care Work for the Aged and the Handicapped

Note: Notification No. 200 of the Ministry of Health and Welfare, December 15, 1987. This notification has been based on the article 1 of chapter 7 of the Law No. 30, 1987.

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